

To Judge Davila,

My name is Danielle McMahon and I am writing to you today on behalf of my mother, Lisa McMahon.

Lisa McMahon is the kind of person that people wish they could have as a family member or friend. She has always been the foundation of our family, even when it was a struggle for her to do so. There was a determination in her to ensure her that my brother and I experienced a childhood that was the exact opposite of the one she experienced. She did everything she could to instill in us a sense of a hard work ethic, good morals and always pushing ourselves to be a better person. When I first heard of the charges against her I was unable to understand how the person who raised me this way could do what she did. I didn't understand that feeling of a desperate need to protect and provide for a family. But I did know that her actions were not done for her own personal benefit or materialistic needs.

Looking back now, I can see where the illness of my grandfather opened up a sense of obligation in my mother to make sure that my grandmother was taken care of. That sense of obligation wasn't new. It is recurring throughout my mother's life. It surfaced again when her best friend was diagnosed with cancer. She allowed the Silva family to rent our family home at a price that was lower than the mortgage, in order to make sure they had a place to live as their family went through their battle with cancer, even though this eventually led to losing the home that my father grew up in. When Lisa Silva passed away, my mother took it very hard, as if a member of her own family had passed. My mother was one of the last people to see her best friend before her passing and that had a big impact on my mother. Later, her overwhelming sense of obligation to protect family came back when our restaurant began to lose money. The restaurant was supposed to be our future; I had invested everything I had both financially and physically into it. My mother was determined to protect me from that failure.

Every day I see exactly how much of an impact my mother has had in my life. I have experienced that same feeling of desperation and obligation when my fiancé's mother passed away and his disabled father needed a place to live and a full time caregiver. The feeling of protection has surfaced again as my family deals with the struggles that we have encountered with my mother's legal battles and most recently as I became a mother myself. Although what my mother did was wrong, I can now understand how she felt it was the only way to protect her family and those she cared about. A series of traumatic and stressful events were just too much for her to handle and she cracked under the pressure of the obligations she had taken on. I'm learning from this devastating experience that you have to respect your own limits and standards as much as what you think your loved ones need.

One thing that she has been adamant in teaching my brother and me is to always admit your mistakes and learn from them. My mother has admitted hers and she is learning from them. For now, she is not the person she used to be. The effects her decisions have had on other people, not just our family but MBARI and the many people she cared deeply about there have caused her anxiety, panic attacks and a complete loss of desire to perform even daily tasks. Our whole family is doing its best to care for her now. We have faith that she will recover and we are counting down until we can be a family once again.

I hope this helps you understand my mother. And I hope you will consider all of this when deciding upon the sentencing of Lisa McMahon.

Thank you,

Danielle McMahon